

The Ballad of Nancy Wheeler and Why She Hates Mondays and the Midwest by i dont knwo

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Summary: You've heard of Bonnie and Clyde, now you'll hear of

Nancy, Jonathan, and Steve.

1. Prologue

JUNE 1984

Sirens echoed all throughout the city of Michigan, startling the most people on the street; bystanders, most of whom have lived in the city all their lives and have not seen this kind of crime be so blatantly and recklessly displayed for the whole of Michigan, maybe even of Indiana, to witness. And in broad daylight nonetheless.

Ahead of the half dozen police cars was a gray Chevrolet Corvette C4 and a black Toyota MR2, both cars seemed to have been modified since it's going even faster than what it's supposed to be capable of. Aboard the Chevrolet was Steve Harrington and Nancy Wheeler, longtime boyfriend and girlfriend and notorious partners-in-crime, involved in various robberies all across the Midwest. Next to them inside the Toyota was Jonathan Byers, their unlikely companion (more like accidental companion, if we're being honest), a mechanical and technological genius.

"Shit," Steve muttered under his breath as they merged into the highway.

"Steve..." Nancy glanced behind them, the worry evident in her eyes as it felt like the police were getting closer and closer to them. "I don't think we're gonna make it,"

"Yes, we fucking are!" he shouted, jamming his foot harder into the gas.

He haphazardly opened the window on his side of the car. "Hey, Byers!" he screamed, glancing between the other car and the road ahead of them.

Their companion did not look at him right away so Steve honked the car horn loud and long. "Hey, you fucking weirdo!"

Jonathan finally turned, brows furrowed, obviously trying hard not to get caught nor crash into anything.

When Steve was sure Jonathan could hear him, he spoke again, "Take the next left to Clare Lake, I'll hold them off for a while! Take Nancy with you-"

"No, Steve I'm not leaving you."

"How exactly do you plan on getting her into my car?!"

"Just trust me."

"You're fucking insane, Harrington!" Jonathan shook his head, as he prepared to take the next exit. "This better work,"

"Nance," he turned to his girlfriend, one hand reaching to squeeze her hand as if to assure her before he reached for a bag behind their seats. "Take the money alright? My pop had an old house in Clare Lake, tell Jonathan to take Shorewood then Hideaway. The keys to the house are in the pocket inside the bag- the house is made of brick and has a white roof, no fences and when you go inside there's a jersey of Kareen Abdul-Jabbar that you will see right away. You two can probably stay there for a day, a day and a half tops."

"What?"

Steve shook his head, already getting really frantic. "Just- did you remember what I told you?"

"Yeah, Shorewood then Hideaway. Then we'll look for you grandfather's house, keys are in the bag."

He couldn't but feel a bit of pride, his girlfriend really is smart and attentive. And honestly, Steve is not sure him and Jonathan would've survive the past year with out her, which is why it's essential that she escape the police right now.

"Alright, seat-belt's off, get ready to run."

"What, Steve-" she hesitated, but nonetheless took off her seat belt. One hand was gripping the handle above on the roof while the other was clutching at knapsack tightly, keeping it secure. "This is insane!"

"Trust me, okay? I love you, I promise I'll meet you in three days at

the Notre Dame Church in Moore Road," he turned to the car speeding next to them. "Hey, unlock your door, Nancy's about to get in, after that get to Clare Lake! Don't stop until you get there. Don't look back! Nancy knows where you two will go after! I'll see you in three days, Notre Dame Church at noon!"

Both cars were now on the left side of the highway, preparing for whatever it is that Steve was actually planning.

Suddenly the Corvette is swerving to its left hitting the tail of the Toyota and they slowly skidding parallel to each other. "Now, Nance!"

It was honestly all a blur for Nancy when she thinks back as to how she got from one car to another, all she knew was that the moment her boyfriend told her to go, she clutched the knapsack, opened the door, and just jumped out. In a miracle, she landed right at the other seat of the other car because Jonathan had the urgency to open the door with one hand while he tried to take control of the car.

After skidding for a few seconds, Steve turned the car around so he was suddenly facing on the horde of police cars, while Jonathan swerved straight and continued forward with Nancy safely sat at the passenger seat of the Toyota (although she was looking a little pale and teary-eyed). "Woohh! Yeah, come and get me shitbirds!" he deliberately nudges the front of his car to the side of a police car coming straight his way, which then led for the police car to bump into another one. Then he continued to drive backwards, blocking and bumping against any police car trying to get past him.

"Your boyfriend might actually have some loose screws in his head," Jonathan laughed in disbelief.

The tactic was actually working, Jonathan's car was pulling ahead from the rest and he was able to go left into the next road with no police cars behind them. The last thing they saw was Steve's car sandwiched between two police cars.

"But he might actually get screwed, too." he shook his head.

"Steve..." was all Nancy could utter, hands still trembling and

breathing uneven as the adrenaline in her body subsided.

Jonathan glanced at her with concern in his eyes. "Hey,"

She shook her head, willing away the tears forming in her eyes. "He'll make it through. He said he'll meet us in three days, he promised." she said more to herself than to her companion really.

"Right, well best hope we actually make it in three days, too."

She glared at him. "What?"

"We're not exactly safe either," he shrugged. "Your boyfriend might have bought us some time but those shitty fuckers will eventually catch up to us, most definitely when we get to Harrington's granddad's place- ow, hey what the fuck?"

Nancy just hit him on the arm again. "What is wrong with you?"

"What's wrong with me?" he asked incredulously. "What the fuck is wrong with you, why'd you hit me?"

"Steve sacrificed himself for us," she shouted, her voice breaking, still not quite believing that her boyfriend was not with them, possibly permanently. "S-so we could survive, now you're saying that what he did w-was all for nothing?!"

"He did that for you, not for 'us', let's make that clear. Nobody asked him to make that sacrifice, I could have easily done the same thing-"

"Then why didn't you?"

"Because I'm not crazy! I'm not some fucking idiot who thinks that doing something like that is heroic,"

A huff escaped her, still irate at her companion. "You are an unbelievable ass, Jonathan Byers."

Jonathan snorted. "Oh yeah, that really hurt my feelings, Nancy,"

She crossed her arms and decided to just ignore him. Something that Jonathan was more than okay with - they could use a little peace and quiet for a while. Plus it helped him think of their next tactic in order to avoid getting caught in the next 3 days.

But not even 5 minutes later, Nancy was already berating him again.

"What are you doing? We need to get to Clare Lake, why are we stopping? Steve said-"

"I know what Harrington said, but we have to lay low for a few hours first." he countered as he drove the car off the main road and parked behind what looks to be a bookstore. "We probably can't even drive around with this car,"

"So, what we'll walk-?"

"I'm not saying we dispose of the car right now, Jesus, Nancy, calm down. We can get another car after we get to the house."

When she didn't answer him anymore, Jonathan sighed and shook his head. The next three days will be a pain. And neither of them are exactly sure if being in such a small town like Clare Lake would be a good or bad thing, because they would sure be noticed right away upon arriving.

"Look, we'll get to the house before midnight, but for now we have to hide in plain sight, probably go to restaurant to eat and kill a few hours there. Then you'll see Harrington in three days."

Nancy just nodded but kept quiet for the most part, her mind wandering to Steve. She knows he'll make it through, but she still worries for him; they haven't been apart for longer than a few hours since they started this whole delinquent ordeal about a year ago, they've been through so much hardship together and she could not bare to lose him, just the thought of losing him made her sick to the stomach.

2. Chapter 1

OCTOBER 1980

Nancy doesn't remember much about her childhood, mostly because there wasn't really anything entertaining or memorable about it. She never really formed any sort of bond with her mother, they never really connected because Nancy always thought that was her mother was too good to be true - it didn't make sense how someone like her mother ended up marrying someone like her father. Her dad was never around, "Your father has to provide for us, honey. That's why he's always working," her mother told her whenever she asked why her dad was always getting home late. Maybe that was the answer as to why her mother had stuck with her father: financial stability. It wasn't out of love - she'd never even heard her parents say 'I love you' to each other in all the years she was under the same roof as them. It's probably why she never really thought that their family was a real typical, all-american family that many people have dreamed of having.

Even when her younger brother Michael was born some 4 years after her, she still thought of how her parents don't love each other; although, she remembered feeling so happy upon finding out she's finally have a sibling, it was getting boring having to play on her own, it's not like she had that many friends to play with either. Mike was mostly what Nancy had imagined what having a younger would be like: he'd annoy the hell out of her and he often times was gross, loud, and weird, but he had his sweet and caring moments, and Nancy truly loved him dearly. And though it didn't happen until later when their mother had finally left their father, Mike did understand all her sentiments about their family.

She remembers that day vividly. Her day had been completely normal (that's to say, it was boring and repetitive), Kaminsky gave them another impossibly difficult pop quiz because Tammy Thompson had apparently forgotten about that they had homework to pass that day, and so the rest of the class had to suffer with her. It was all bullshit, Nancy thought. Tommy H also tried to copy off of her on that test. At lunch she saw Steve Harrington get slapped by Becky Smith because he had dumped her via a note that was passed on through their class. Then she and Bard got partnered for an English research project.

When Nancy got home in the afternoon, she was surprised to see her mother frantically packing her bags.

"Mom, what's going on?"

She got no response.

"Mom," she followed her around their house, calling for her mother's attention a few more times. "Mom..."

Karen Wheeler finally stopped and sat at the edge of the bed in the master's bedroom. Even then Nancy noticed how there was wide gap that separated her parents' pillows, that didn't feel like it was just a coincidence.

"Mom, what's happening? Where's Mike?"

Her mother patted the space next to her and Nancy obliged, cautiously taking a seat next to her.

Karen took a deep breath before sighing, "I'm leaving, Nancy," she quietly said. "I can't take this anymore. I'm so tired of sitting around. Your brother is with the Byers, he'll stay there for the night. It'd be easier that way,"

"Mom, that's-" she couldn't think of any coherent thing to say.

"I'm so sorry, honey." Karen turned and took her hands in, clutching it. She wasn't sure if it was her own hands that were trembling or it was her mother's. "I- God, I tried so hard, really. He- your father, he's..." she could tell her mother was barely holding herself together, "He could provide for you and Mike, okay? But you're going to have to look out for yourself and Michael for a while. I promise I'll comeback for you two, okay? But right now I can't take you with me, it would just be too much, and I can't let you go through such hardships."

"But, mom-"

"It's going to be okay, Nancy."

She tried to act strong and firm, but the tears spilling from her eyes begged to differ. At thirteen, Nancy had some what an understanding as to why

her mother was leaving them, but that didn't mean she didn't get hurt about it. "When w-will we see yo-you again?" her voice was quiet and shattered.

"I-I don't know yet... but just- stay here, okay? Take care of yourself and your brother, y-you have everything you will ever n-need h-here, with, um your father." her mother was barely holding her own composure. "Be good, honey, but never forget to appreciate the little things, okay? Live your life the way you want it to be, never let anyone degrade your worth,"

Everything that Karen said was definitely in connection her personal relationship with Ted, this just confirmed to Nancy more about the fact that her parents never really loved each other.

Her mother left shortly after that.

It was crappy way to start her week.

"There, no fence, white roof," Nancy pointed at a particularly old looking house (especially compared to the ones next to it), just a few houses before the cul de sac of Hideaway drive. The whole street was already quiet although there we few more houses with lights open, but they were sure no one would notice them if they get into the house.

"Let's hope no one's home," Jonathan commented, parking the car along the sidewalk about a block away from the said house. "You got the keys?"

She dangled the keys with a basketball key chain from her hand.

"We should probably get through a side or back door," he suggested. "Just to be safe,"

"Right, that's a good idea..."

They cautiously walked towards the side of the house, Nancy was ahead as she peered at the side window to check if there are any signs that anyone has been inside recently, while Jonathan surveyed their surroundings, looking out in case anyone anyone was watching them.

"Hey, Jonathan," she said in hushed tone. "Come on, there's a back door." she jerked her head towards the back of the house.

He looked a couple more times, making sure no one was around to see them enter the house. "Okay, go,"

The quickly run to the back side. She already has the keys out so it take long for her to find the correct key to open the back door.

"Look," he gestured at the single paneled garaged door, its paint already faded out. "Let's hope Steve's grandfather still has his car there."

They finally get inside. They couldn't exactly see much of the house since they couldn't really open any of the lights because that might alert any of the neighbors that someone was inside. Steve never told them how long the house had been empty so they couldn't risk anything; they couldn't even pose as relatives of the Harringtons. Still Jonathan tries his best to survey the house without having to bump into most of the furniture, using the light coming through the window from the lamp posts outside to navigate around the house.

There were a few furnitures downstairs: an old beaten couch, a television set (that's probably broken and without cable), the dining set looked like it would collapse with even so much as a strand of hair or a fly settle on top of it.

"Abdul-Jabbar," she whispered upon seeing the coveted Milwaukee Bucks jersey hanging at the hallway right across the front door.

"What?"

She pointed at the jersey. "Steve said his grandfather had a jersey of this basketball player,"

Jonathan just shook his head, opting not comment on that matter, knowing it would probably spark another argument between them. "So, I checked the plumbing, the water in the kitchen is clean but the pressure is a little so it'll take some time if you want to use the bath tub,"

"What? Why would I- nevermind," she rolled her eyes before walking

past him and heading upstairs.

There were three rooms upstairs, the room furthest down the hall to the right was the master's bedroom, the one next to it is smaller as well as the lone room to the left. The bathroom was in the middle of the hall.

Nancy didn't know much about Steve's family because he never really liked talking about them. All she knows was that his dad was the son of a war veteran and that they lived a good and well life; Steve grew up in a well off family, he didn't have much responsibility other than be a good son and probably get the same blue collar job at finance or marketing or something like his dad. But he never really fit in that same way, Steve didn't know what he wanted to do that much he'd told Nancy (a couple of times actually), but he knew he didn't want that kind of desk job. It was probably one of the things that had drawn her to the King of Hawkins High himself.

She always thought that he was just another one of those pretty rich boys who had nothing going on about themselves aside from being pretty and popular, that he was just another asshole that Nancy would forget once she leaves Hawkins, but that same week when her mother left them about 4 years ago, she got to know Steve a little better at a party.

And it being one of the crappiest week of her life, Nancy partied the night away. At first she tried to ignore Steve's advances, she knew she was just going to be another notch on his belt, but at the night progressed on and she actually held a proper conversation with him, she realized maybe he wasn't so bad. Though she still thought he was a jerk, it did shine some light to a more sensitive and rational Steve Harrington.

A knock on the door brought her out of her musings; she was sitting at the musty old bed at the master's bedroom, standing by the doorway was Jonathan. "I have to get rid of the car, stay here."

"Why?" she frowned. "We still need to get to Steve in three days, how-"

"I just checked the garage, there's a car there and it still works. We

can't drive around in the Toyota anymore because the police are looking for it,"

Nancy sighed, massaging her temple. "Just-"

"Get some rest." he dismissed, "I'll be back right away," then he left, heading outside. He knew he still couldn't go out through the front door, so he had to maneuver his way downstairs again.

Once he was out of the house, he quickly snuck back into the car, only to be startled by Nancy knocking on the window of the car right as he started the ignition.

"I'm coming with you,"

"Jesus-" he sighed, visibly shaken by getting caught off guard. "Why?"

Not wanting to attraction anybody else's attention, he unlocked the car and slowly drove the car closer to the lake. He knew the only way to dispose of the car is to sink it in the lake, that way they can buy themselves at least a day more before the police actually discover that they had been there; Clare Lake also is also a little shallow so he'll have to deflate the tires once the car is halfway in the lake.

It's gonna be a long night.

[&]quot;Just open the door,"

3. Chapter 2

The moment Steve saw Jonathan's car take the left, he knew he succeeded. And that was all that mattered to him. He didn't even care if he got the car trashed.

He finally drove the car straight, the tail end of the car bumping against one of the police car. He tried his best to swerve and disarray the four cars left.

"Yeah, you dip-shits, come and get me," he muttered under his breath.

Steve pressed his foot on the gas pedal harder, willing the car to go faster and past the Clare Lake exit. he's sure Nancy and Jonathan has escaped now. But he needs to get away from them as far as how this car will take him.

It took a few more kilometers before the police finally kept pace with him. He figured it would be as good a time to get caught, he's running out of gas now as well.

But he still made an effort to make it difficult for the police to catch him - maybe he can still make a run for it, for one. So, he crashed his car against the side of another police vehicle sending both of them down the side of the highway and into the bushes. The car was in no proper shape to go any further, he could even smell the engine heating up and smoking a little.

"Okay, okay, okay. Holy shit," he screamed, hurriedly scrambling out of the car. "Fuck you, guys!"

"He's out of the car! Get him," he heard one officer shout.

A officer started to get of the car that he crashed into but Steve was quick enough to knock him back inside the car, pushing the door with unnecessary force.

He ran past the bushes; there isn't much for him to hide behind - there's literally just a field of grass ahead of him. Still he makes a run

for it.

Steve made it a few meters down the field before he heard gun shots, evidently making him stop in his tracks.

"Hands behind your head!" one officer shouted.

He raised his hands up.

"Behind your head!" the officer repeated. "And turn around."

Out of spite, Steve stood his ground, not following a single thing the police officer told him. Despite getting smacked on the back of his head and harshly pushed down to his knees, he thought it was well worth it to piss the police off.

"Not so tough now, are you kid?"

He snorted. "Fuck off-" a hand slapped him across the face. "You call that a sla- ow! Son of a bitch!" a fist collided with his gut, making him double over of the ground as they put hand cuffs on his wrists.

"You'll get more of that if you don't shut up, pretty boy,"

NOVEMBER 1980

Steve Harrington grew up in what could only be called as the all-American dream household. He was an only child but he had many friends at school; he loved the attention, he loved being adored by everyone whether it be his fellow classmates, teachers or just strangers, all the mattered to him was that they were paying attention to him and praising him for whatever it is that he did. Even if it wasn't particularly exceptional or even good.

Everything in his life seemed to be perfect. Except for that one blunder in his life during his middle school, something he's not willing relive. It was a humiliating mistake that he tried to make up from that moment on. That's when he learned to never fully trust anyone, to never show his true emotions, and just be as cool and unabashedly brutish as he can be because he can't afford anyone taking advantage of him.

He clawed his way into the popular crowd - well with his good looks (that hair is everything) and charm, it was more like he cat walked his way through it. By the end of middle school he was on top of the food chain of Hawkins and it just continued on in high school - King Steve, that's what they called him. He had most of the school at the palm of his hands - most girls would fall at his feet, the guys all wanted to be his friend - and for a while he felt invincible. Hawkins High was his playground, his empire.

It's probably why he felt such an overwhelming surge of fear when he thought about high school ending; each year as he comes closer to senior year, Steve would get that gut wrenching feeling creeping over him. He mostly pushed those thoughts away as much as possible, but every now and then something would remind him of how this life of his was not permanent. Whether it was his father telling him about how he could work for him in their company if he didn't want to continue to pursue a tertiary degree, or just some random dude in the cafeteria talking about his plans for college - all those things scared Steve (not that he'd admit it out loud).

Well, he did admit it out loud once.

Just about a week ago, he dumped Becky - he couldn't even remember her last name, just that she was Becky from his History class (so yeah, he probably deserved to be slapped by Becky - and now he's looking forward to just partying the night away at the Zimmerman brothers' Halloween Party, maybe he can get lucky and hook up with someone there, too (that's probably a guarantee since most of Hawkins High will be at that party).

That's when he met Nancy Wheeler.

Well, it wasn't the first time he'd met Nancy, he'd known about her since 6th grade when they first moved to Hawkins. But this was the first time he'd ever seen her at a party. She wasn't particularly someone he pegged to go to loud, crowded, and rowdy parties like the Zimmermans', and by the way she was poorly handling herself, he was sure this was probably her first real party.

"Whoa, okay there," he swooped in beside her as he watched her dip her red cup and half her hand in the, most likely vodka spiked, punch. "I think that's enough for you,"

Nancy paused, most likely because she does not recognize him right away. "Ah, it's King Steve, everybody!" she shouted, almost deafening him. "To what do I owe the please, Steve Harrington?" her words were slurred a sure sign that she's drunk and would most likely have terrible hangover the next day. Yet somehow, Steve saw the grief in her eyes.

There was a reason why Nancy Wheeler was here. And that drew him to her.

"Why don't we get you a different drink, Nancy? That's not really good anyway,"

Nancy looked at him as if she was surprised that he knew her name - and maybe that was really odd - but Nancy is one of the smartest people in Hawkins High, and if Steve was being honest, he found Nancy beautiful so much so that he thought she was way out of league. It was why he never really made a move at her.

And that night should have been no different, he should have just avoided her, left her for someone else to take care of her. But he couldn't. He was genuinely concerned for her, he could tell Nancy was going through something like a burden that's way too heavy for pre-teen.

"Did you come with someone tonight, Nancy?" he continued to inquire, looking around if anyone else would be willing to look after her, but he didn't really trust anyone in this party to take care of Nancy Wheeler; some of them were too drunk to even take care of themselves.

"Why? Do you want me to come with you?" she tried to sound as if she was interested in him, which he only found adorable. She was more adorable than sexily.

"Alright, that's- hey, Ally," he called from across the room, only assuming that Ally was friends with Nancy because, well Ally was friends with everyone.

"Hey, Steve," Ally sauntered over to them. "Oh, Nancy huh?"

He scoffed at the suggestion. "No. She's drunk, Jesus. I wouldn't-" he cut himself off knowing going defensive would only add to whatever it was that Ally was thinking, and it would certainly draw more attention to them than what was necessary. "You're friend with her right?" he questioned gesturing at the drunk Nancy Wheeler anchored at his arm.

"I mean, yeah, we've hung out before,"

"Okay, good. I'll sober her up then you can let her crash in your house."

There was a finality in his voice that Ally could refuse.

Steve brought Nancy to the kitchen to grab two bottles of water before leading to the upstairs bathroom, where he had to kick out two girls who were definitely making out (see any other day he would've been intrigued about that, not that there was anything wrong with that, but that night just wasn't that kind of night).

He made her sit on marble counter top of the sink while he went and got a fresh towel from the cabinet.

"King Steve," she kept on saying in a sing-song, teasing voice. "Hail King Steve, so generous, taking care of wee-old me. A nobody like Nancy Wheeler! I must be the lucky girl for the night, huh?"

That made him frown; do people only see him as a person who talks or interacts with girls to hook up? But he kept his mouth shut, maybe Nancy didn't mean that. She was drunk after all.

What was he thinking, none of this mattered. He didn't care. He shouldn't care.

Yet he still did. Somehow Nancy's opinion of him mattered.

"You're not." he muttered as he gently wiped her cheeks with the wash cloth that he ran under the tap. "I just wanted to help you, Nancy. I have no other intention."

"Why not?"

"What do you mean?"

"I am too much of a prude for you, Steve Harrington?" she jabbed a finger at his chest. "Am I not pretty enough? Not your type?"

He sighed. "You need to take a rest, Nancy." he grabbed her hand that was still poking at him and gently put it on her lap before taking the water bottle and opening it and making her drink. "And you're not- I don't care if you're a prude or whatever. You're one of the prettiest girl I've ever seen and also really smart."

"Am I? Does that matter?"

"What?"

"Does anything really matter? Or they're all just bullshit?" She must be really drunk. There was a reckless kind of aspect in every word and movement of Nancy, she was breaking down; it's messy but he also thought it was fearless and a different kind of beautiful that she was able to let go of all inhibitions and bare whatever it was that she was carrying to someone like him.

It captivated him. She captivated him.

"Don't you just want to runaway and forget everything, start over?"

"Yeah, I get it. Life is hard and scary..." he admitted, not really knowing why he was suddenly talking about his feelings. "And sometimes you want to abandon everything, forget about all your responsibilities - for once prioritize what you want, no pressure from you family or your friends or some wanna-be mentor that assumes that they know you..."

There was a sudden gleam in her eyes, it was different from than the first time he got a good look at her earlier in the night. He knew that a part of her is still drunk, but there was an understanding within her. She knew what he was talking about.

The trance between them was broken when someone incessantly knocked on the bathroom door.

"Hey, what the fuck? Who's in there?"

"You okay?" Steve asked, helping her down from the sink.

Nancy nodded. "Thanks,"

"I could give you a ride home, if you want." he suggested as they finally

went out of the bathroom. The guy who was all but shoving them aside to get inside, paused for a brief moment, realizing who that it was him who just got out of the bathroom.

"Yeah, Steve, get so-" he glared at him. "Uh, I mean, goodnight. Yeah, that was it."

Either Nancy was still too drunk to hear that or she just didn't care. Nonetheless she turned to him, "You're not so bad, Steve Harrington,"